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LARRY CRAIG

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NEWS RELEASE

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CRAIG VOTES TO OVERRIDE BUSH FARM BILL VETO

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Calling the bill setting farm policy for the next five years “essential to our food security and food safety and to preventing American agriculture from moving outside our borders,” Idaho Senator Larry Craig voted Thursday to override President Bush’s veto of the farm bill conference report.

“President Bush and I have agreed on many issues, but setting farm policy is not one of them,” Craig said. “This bill is long overdue, and it’s time for it to become law.”

The Senate overrode the President’s veto by a vote of 82 yeas to 13 nays, with one voting present, a week after passing the conference report by a vote of 81 to 15.

Formally titled the Food, Conservation and Energy Act of 2008, the bill sets the primary food and agricultural policy of the federal government.

The legislation contains a brand new specialty crops title which includes many provisions developed and advocated by Craig. These provisions for the first time will address the needs of many important Idaho commodities, from potatoes to wine and table grapes. “Specialty crops are about 51 percent of the gross revenue of American agriculture,” Craig said. “But they have never been mentioned in our federal ag policy.”

The farm bill advances the specialty crop industry not through direct subsidies, but by enhancing their competitiveness in local markets and including them in fresh fruit and vegetable snack programs in grade schools in all States. Craig said the new specialty crop provisions also include pest and disease management programs, food safety initiatives, and funding for mechanization and plant breeding programs, among others.